And thus, I lie to myself

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And thus, I lie to myself

by Nalyra

Summary

The aftermath of "almost" killing Mr. Ingram.

Notes

This is a gift for "avegetariancannibal" who won my giveaway on tumblr and asked for:

"Hannibal and Will caught in the rain...maybe in season 1 but whatever you think is best...them being annoyed at first but coming in from the cold and helping dry each other it can be friendly or with sexual tension"

:)

OK; this went a bit differently than I planned and... I hope you like it.
For some reason I could not bring levity into it here, the scene after/in the stable just feels too/so raw...

See the end of the work for more notes

„With all my knowledge and intrusion, I could never entirely predict you. I can feed the caterpillar, whisper through the chrysalis, but what hatches follows its own nature and is beyond me.“

*****

Snow is falling and the melting flakes leave a vaguely wet, cold imprint on Will's skin, failing with concerning fatality to wash away the tingle on his right jaw and neck, where the scorching hot memory refuses to let up. Will swallows and opens his eyes, his vision obscured by snowflakes settling on his lashes, watching the air condense and fog his breath. The white flakes are swirling sedately around him, illuminated by the pale moonlight and the even paler blue flashing lights of too many police cars, the hustling movements of the agents around him vaguely out of sync, like a dream, just an iota too slow to feel real.

Ingram is long gone already, bloody and scared and surprisingly mute, all things considered. Will wonders for a split second whether it had been a good idea to leave Hannibal alone with him in the barn but dismisses the thought as inconsequential. If Hannibal has somehow made Ingram stay quiet about their little… incident it will only serve Will's agenda in the long run. Their agenda. Will swallows and focuses slightly on the booming voice to the left of him, talking to Hannibal now in an almost hush. Tying ends up no doubt, though from which end would probably be open to dispute.

Will closes his eyes again and time slows for him, speeding up the movements around him, the cold wetness seeping into his clothes slowly, like a chilling embrace, calming and grounding. He feels silence descend and doesn't start when the hand gently lowers onto his upper arm, squeezing lightly, nor does he open his eyes, the organs not needed anymore to see -him-.

„The FBI has left. Let me take you home, Will.“

Will inhales deeply, his right jaw itching to rekindle the imprint of warmth, his eyes opening to Hannibal's profile, watching him with an almost wistful and yet hungry expression. Will quirks his lips, lightly shrugging, though not as to shake the hand off, as he is painfully aware.

„I would only get the Bentley wet. I'll call a cab.“

Hannibal quirks a smile, apparently in too good a mood to care much, eyes twinkling in the dark.

„I believe I may be as wet as you are. The Bentley can be dried, after all.“

Will turns his head away for a second, watching the darkness swirl around them. He shrugs again, lightly again, clicking his tongue.

„Very well.“

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The trip is tranquil, the snowy streets almost hypnotizing in the little field of vision the headlights grant them. Hannibal is driving slowly, the snow having turned to mostly drizzling rain now, making the road slippery.

They reach Wolftrap as the sun rises, the first rays filtering through the trees, bathing his home in an eery twilight. Will shifts slightly, feeling the wet cloth cling to his skin everywhere, glad to be home soon. He looks over at Hannibal, silent for the whole trip, looking weirdly pale in the not-quite-morning light. The words tumble from Will's mouth before he can think them, bypassing his will, only allowing his intentions.

„You should come in and shower and borrow some clothes from me. Or sleep in the guest room. Another 1 1/2 hours and you might catch your death."

Hannibal pulls into the driveway, his face impassive, stopping the car in Will's driveway with deliberate slow movements. He kills the engine, his fingers hovering over the keys for a long moment before he tilts his head, eyes averted and nods, once.

„It would be wise. Thank you, Will."

Will nods, feeling slightly out of sorts before pushing the door open, the crisp cool air sending shivers down his spine. He hurries through the now heavy rain, needing to get these clothes off suddenly, increasingly uncomfortable. He pushes the door open, glad the dogs are with the neighbors still. He feels Hannibal come up behind him, quietly and -massive- in the air somehow, his presence commanding space.

Hannibal closes the door behind them and Will pulls a face before turning, gesticulating towards the cabinet.

„Whiskey before shower?"

Hannibal watches his face for a long moment before he nods, his eyes dark.

„Please."

He begins to take off his sodden coat matter of factly, putting it over a chair and Will shakes himself out of his reverie, turning towards the tumbler of Scotch there. He pours them both two fingers, and offers it to Hannibal, trying to ignore his own almost disappointment when Hannibal takes it without… what. Will shies away from his own train of thoughts and drowns the whiskey in one long swallow, the liquid trailing down his throat like fire, tickling, though the impulse to cough is long gone.

Hannibal watches him and then sips on his own, seemingly comfortable with the situation they are in, the way the evening turned out. There is a long pause and then Will turns, throwing the words back over his shoulder.

„The guest room is upstairs, as is the bathroom. I'll go make up the bed. Please shower first. There are some towels and sweats in the cupboard."

He snorts slightly, trying and failing to imagine Hannibal in a jogging outfit, and then halts, turning back slightly.

„Guess you'll have to borrow some underwear as well. I'll put some out."

He turns towards the stairs before Hannibal can answer, the thought of Hannibal wearing his underwear strangely unsettling and heavy in his stomach. He turns towards the guest room and pulls new linen from the closet, his mind blissfully static as he makes up the bed, snapping back to reality when he hears the bathroom door closing.

The sound of the shower running follows and Will blinks, shaking out the blanket and looking down at the bed as if stupefied for a long moment, before he turns to descend the stairs again.

„Will?"

Hannibal's voice rings out clear and loud and yet … tamed, calling through the closed door. Will licks his lips, throwing the word over his shoulder.

„Yeah?"

A pause, with water splashing.

„Could you procure some shampoo for me? The bottle here seems to be empty."

Will curses quietly to himself, reaching up to scratch his neck, the wet cloth on his arms making almost inaudible quenching sounds. He exhales in a rush, calling back towards the bathroom.

„Just a moment."

He skids down the steps and into his pantry, rummaging around until he finds the shampoo he got at last years Christmas lottery at the supermarket, its quality slightly higher than the one he normally uses, refusing to think about why he does so. He steps back up, hesitating in front of the door, his hand on the door knob.

„Please, come in, Will."

Will pulls a face and then enters his small, very steamed up bathroom, the shadow of Hannibal behind the shower curtain utterly unreal.

„Here."

He holds the shampoo out, waiting, acutely aware suddenly that he is still dripping onto the floor and has done so for the past half hour. Hannibal's voice rings out, somehow careful and calculating.

„How much hot water is in that boiler you have in your back yard, Will.“

Will tilts his head in annoyance, his hand cramping on the shampoo bottle.

„Enough.“

Hannibal hums, and then pokes his head out from the shower curtain, looking … weird to Will, something as mundane as this situation feeling utterly unreal. Hannibal looks at him a moment and then clicks his tongue, his head tilting in a vaguely reptile manner.

„As your doctor I would advice you to step out of these clothes now and join me. There is enough room for propriety as you well know.“

Will snorts, derision heavy on his tongue.

„You’re not my physician. And… Wouldn’t that be nice? Me dying of pneumonia… Nothing to be… afraid of anymore.“

Hannibal tilts his head a bit more, eyes narrowing, the corner of his mouth twitching in an almost smile.

„That would be one of the things I am afraid of, Will. Come, we are adults after all.“

Hannibal withdraws his head, and Will is left standing, vaguely fuming, feeling for all the world like a petulant child. He throws the shampoo bottle into the shower, uncaring if he hits Hannibal with it and then starts to remove his sodden clothes with jerky movements, finally allowing himself to feel the shivering in his limbs and the almost clatter of his teeth.

He steps into the shower with the brazen attitude of petulance still coloring his movements, turning away from Hannibal right away. The water only hits a part of his back and there is a spray of droplets that’s apparently bouncing off of Hannibal’s skin, driving home the fact that he is there, behind Will, with crystal clarity. Will tilts his head up and tries to concentrate on the hot water cascading down, some of it catching his scalp if he arches a bit back, and he closes his eyes, trying to soak up warmth. There is a slight movement behind him and Will has the weird impression of hesitation behind him before it fades, and Will can hear the soft squelching sounds of shampoo being massaged into hair. He narrows his eyes trying to catch onto the feeling of a chance passed, wondering if Hannibal had been thinking about washing Will’s hair for him, the thought making him feel… funny. Weirdly undecided. Hannibal turns behind him and the smell of the shampoo drifts over and Will inhales deeply, the almost domestic situation weirdly calming. He puts his head back forward and turns slightly sideways, eyes lowered in an unseeing gaze, watching the suds run down Hannibal’s legs in a slightly detached way.

The hand on his neck and jaw startles him a bit and yet, yet it doesn’t and he follows the light pressure and raises his eyes to Hannibal’s, meeting the dark gaze unflinchingly. Hannibal seems to be on the verge of saying something but then his lips only quirk into an almost smile before the hand drops away again and he steps out of the shower in one swift motion. Will closes his eyes and wills the phantom impression on his skin away, intensified a thousandfold right now, almost solid, almost there. He bends down and gets himself some of the shampoo,

tries to push the feeling of reluctant regret down as he massages it into his own hair, the smell of course associated to Hannibal now, and Will wishes he had something else but grits his teeth and rinses it out again quickly.

He can hear the soft movement of cloth on skin as Hannibal towels off, his presence burning on the other side of the curtain. Then a few soft steps and he hears the door, clicking softly, the negative impression of Hannibal taking up the whole room, even as he walks down towards the guest room.

Will swallows and then steps out of the shower with jerky movements, reaching for a new towel, eyeing the carefully hung up one as if it would attack him every moment. He combs his hair with a few rough strokes, almost dry again and then slings the towel around his hips, padding downstairs uncaringly, the door to the guest room still closed.

He throws on boxers and a shirt, only daring to relax when he is done, throwing the towel over a kitchen chair on his way back up. He makes sure his steps can be heard, stopping in front of the door to the guest room, hesitating, eyes flicking over to the open bathroom door, noting absently that Hannibal's clothes have been cleared away. He knocks once, keeping his voice neutral, suddenly bone tired.

„I'm gonna catch some sleep. I hope you get some as well."

He stops, not knowing what else to say, the door opening, revealing Hannibal, bare chested and in too small boxers, outlined in sunshine. Will swallows, gesticulating vaguely.

„The blinds get stuck sometimes. You need to tug at the left corner."

Hannibal looks at him for a moment and then nods, once, face an open and yet closed expression, hiding and showing in equal measure, and Will shakes his head, suddenly tired of deciphering it.

He nods at Hannibal and then turns, taking the steps down in practiced skips, almost falling down onto his own bed. He pulls the covers up, watching the sunlight filter through the dirty windows for a moment, his mind full of static.

Sleep comes like a flood, drowning Will in dreamless sleep, unstoppable, carried on the gaze of eyes that watch over him, a presence, securing him to this reality, tethering his nightmares, burning his life.

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The next therapy session is a few days after „Mr. Ingram", forcing truths and half lies, leaving Will feeling thinly veiled and raw. He walks around the office, after, trying to reach some sense of tranquility or resolution before he leaves, his gaze falling on the coffee table at

the back. He is drawn to it, inexplicably, his hand reaching out before his mind can comprehend, reality coming to a standstill around him.

There is a new sketch, the room on it recognizable but only vaguely rendered, as is the man in it, asleep, bathed in light, filtering though dirty windows. Will swallows and traces the image for a second, his fingertips coming away smudged.

„So you -were- watching me. I believe I do not look quite this peaceful though.“

Hannibal steps closer slowly, his aura branding up to Will, his words latching onto Will’s soul, hooks digging deep.

„No. You do not.“

Hannibal smiles, sharp teeth flashing, watching Will like a shark.

„Not yet.“

End Notes

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Kudos and comments feed my muse :)
Also - criticism IS WELCOME.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!
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